



The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework — "Te Arataki"

This policy framework provides information and guidance on how to improve the wellbeing of our military veterans, their families and whānau.


Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mō ngā Mōrehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau

Read the policy framework

You can view a PDF of the document.



(<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Work-Programmes/The-Veteran-Family-and-Whanau-Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Policy-Framework.PDF>)

 [The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework \[PDF, 2.3 MB\]](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Work-Programmes/The-Veteran-Family-and-Whanau-Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Policy-Framework.PDF)
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You can also contact us to request a printed version of the document.

Contact us (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

Latest update: 7 June 2023

Following Te Arataki's release, Veterans' Affairs and Veterans Advisor Willie Apiata VC met with over 25 government and non-government agencies. They discussed what those agencies could do to better understand and improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their whānau.


For many outside the veterans sector, it was the first time they had participated in an in-depth discussion about veterans and their whānau, and the first time thinking about their role and how they could contribute to improving the lives of those who have served their country.

Strategic Action Plan

On the basis of those meetings, a draft Strategic Action Plan for Te Arataki was developed. The draft has been tested with the Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Roundtable and attendees at the March 2023 Te Arataki Symposium, and amended to reflect their views.

Te Arataki work programme

Veterans' Affairs have also been working with key agencies to agree an initial Te Arataki work programme, one that sits beneath the Strategic Action Plan. These actions are for the period from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2024.

 [The Te Arataki July 2023–December 2024 Work Programme \[PDF, 3.5 MB\]](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Work-Programmes/Te-Arataki-July-2023-to-December-2024-Work-Programme.pdf)
(<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Work-Programmes/Te-Arataki-July-2023-to-December-2024-Work-Programme.pdf>)

The initial work programme actions cluster around 3 themes that align with the initial priorities identified during the development of Te Arataki:

1. Investigating what we know about the mental health and wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand's veterans and the use of veteran identifiers.
2. Better connecting with those veterans who may be missing out.
3. Educating and training public sector workers around veteran and whānau needs and responses, and ensuring that strategies, plans and service delivery align with, and support, Te Arataki.

About the framework

This policy framework provides information and guidance on how to improve the wellbeing of our military veterans, their families and whānau.

The framework is named *Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mo ngā Mōrehu ā Tū me ō Rātou Whānau: The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework*.

Most of New Zealand's veterans will experience good mental health and make a successful and safe transition into civilian society. However, a small number will face mental health and addiction challenges and be at risk of a range of poor outcomes.

This framework draws on international evidence and local experience to explain the factors that may impact on the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. It identifies the groups at higher risk of poor outcomes and suggests effective responses and priority areas for action.


The framework has been developed for the wide range of individuals and organisations that contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. This includes civilian organisations such as government departments, health service funders, workforce and research bodies, and health provider groups such as doctors, nurses and allied professions. It will also be useful for the New Zealand Defence Force and service and veterans' organisations.

Watch a short video about the experiences of veterans

"We live and breathe everything we have done in our service. But we need help."

Additional resources

Press release about the framework (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/a-way-forward-for-veterans-health-and-wellbeing/>)

Recording of the document release event (<https://youtu.be/GKsHsao-e9k>) 

Defence Health Hub

The Defence Health Hub has practical information for improving the mental health of veterans and their whānau.

Defence Health Hub website (<https://health.nzdf.mil.nz/your-health/mind/>) 

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